The Power to  
Influence

Understanding Credibility

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| Who has the greatest influence over you?  Who would be most likely to persuade you to a new course of action? |

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| What is it about these individuals that enables them to influence you?  Why would you listen to them and act upon their words? |

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| Notes: |

Building Credibility

It is critical that we understand how other people see us. Look at the 2 dimensions of perceived experience and strength of relationships.

**Credibility Ratings Example:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Perceived Expertise** | **Strength of Relationship** |
| Paul | 5 | 4 |
| Michelle | 1 | 2 |
| Anne | 2 | 5 |
| Richard | 3 | 3 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Perceived**  **Expertise** | **5**  **4**  **3**  **2**  **1** | Strong on Expertise  Weak on Relationship | Strong on Expertise  Strong on Relationship |
| Weak on Expertise  Weak on Relationship | Strong on Relationship  Weak on Expertise |
|  |  | **1 2 3 4 5** | |
|  |  | **Strength of Relationship** | |

Now, think of 5 people who you need/want to influence. Chart them below, using the following guide for scoring.

**Perceived Expertise**

1 = This individual considers I have no expertise.

2 = This individual considers I have little expertise.

3 = This individual considers I have some expertise.

4 = This individual considers I have quite a lot of expertise.

5 = This individual considers I am an expert.

**Strength of Relationship**

1 = I have a poor relationship with this individual.

2 = I do not currently have any relationship with this individual.

3 = I have a reasonable relationship with this individual.

4 = I have a strong relationship with this individual.

5 = I have an extremely strong relationship with this individual.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Perceived Expertise** | **Strength of Relationship** |
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| Notes: |

**Credibility Chart**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Perceived**  **Expertise** | **5**  **4**  **3**  **2**  **1** |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  | **1 2 3 4 5** | |
|  |  | **Strength of Relationship** | |

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| Where do I have a limitation that will make influencing more difficult? |

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| How can I overcome any limitations? |

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| Notes: |

The Games People Play

Some Games

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| 1. | Resistance and Revolution Game | Played against higher level players – often seen as kicking against ‘Authority’ or ‘They’. Can be led by Trades Unions but more usually comes from small, informal cadres within teams. |
| 2. | ‘Smash the Revolution’ Game | The higher level players fight back. |
| 3. | Favouritism Game | Played by lower level players who want to build their personal power by bonding with powerful superiors. |
| 4. | King of the  Castle Game | Played particularly by middle and senior managers who build their power base by increasing their resources, e.g. staff, budgets, buildings, functions, departments. |
| 5. | Gang Game | When there’s more than one king (or queen) of the castle game going on then this is the game, which may be played next. The rivalry is often between departments (the classic Sales v Production rivalry) but it may also be over values, goals and visions. |
| 6. | Knowledge and Skill Game | Played by “experts” who use the ‘mystery’ of their technical skills and knowledge to hold power over others. Typically, they over-emphasise the difficulty of what they do to keep others in their place. |
| 7. | Promotion and Position Game | Often played by new managers in middle and senior positions who bring in their own candidates to increase their power and safeguard their territory. |

Your Examples

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Game** | **Your Example** | **Game Positives** | **Game Negatives** |
|  | Resistance and Revolution Game |  |  |  |
|  | ‘Smash the Revolution’ Game |  |  |  |
|  | Favouritism Game |  |  |  |
|  | King of  the Castle Game |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Game** | **Your Example** | **Game Positives** | **Game Negatives** |
|  | Gang Game |  |  |  |
|  | Knowledge and Skill Game |  |  |  |
|  | Promotion and Position Game |  |  |  |

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| Notes: |

Power Quotes

Here are a number of different things people have said about power. How do you feel about them?

*‘Power is the ability, to mobilize resources (human and material) to get things done. The true sign of power, then is accomplishment – not fear, terror, or tyranny.*

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. *Rosabeth Moss Kanter on the Frontiers of Management*. Harvard Business Press. 1997

*‘Managerial authority and organisational politics are not black arts, they are an essential part of the process of management. Power is a positive force, giving you freedom, choice and strength, although it does carry responsibilities ... to shun politics and power is a naïve mistake, one that will put you at the mercy of powerful and influential people and one that will bar you from many desirable and senior jobs.’*

Lee Bryce. *The Influential Woman*. 1989

*‘Power is a state of mind. It’s the ability to project an impression that, while others may be indecisive, confused or weak you know what to do, how to get it done and have the courage, energy and ability to do it.’*

Michael Korda. *Power! How to Get It, How to Use It*. 1975

*‘Power is very much a matter of perception - our own and others.’*

Anon

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| Notes: |

Types of Power

Here are some of the different types of power. Add an explanation that will help you remember and identify each.

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| --- | --- |
| Authority/  Position |  |
| Expert |  |
| Resource |  |
| Interpersonal |  |
| Networks |  |

Your Profile of Power

The following questions are designed to get you thinking about the power bases you have at the moment.

The questions are divided between the five types of power bases that are available to managers - Authority/Position, Expert, Resource, Interpersonal, and Network power.

The questions will help you to identify if you have a particular power base. The more positive indicators you have, the greater your power.

Please complete this carefully, thinking about all those with whom you interact. Try not to undersell or to over-value yourself.

Authority/Position

1. Do you have the right to make decisions, other than trivial ones - especially decisions that involve expenditure?
2. Do others need your approval before they can take action?
3. Do your decisions affect important aspects of the organisation’s work?
4. Do you appraise anyone else’s work?
5. Does your manager typically support your decisions?
6. Do you work in a key part of the organisation?
7. Can you provide praise/reward/discipline/punishment to others?
8. Do you encounter any resistance to your right to make decisions/supervise others/give approval from staff, peers or seniors?

A ‘Yes’ answer to any of questions 1-7 indicate that you possess this sort of power. You need to determine how much power you have against others in the organisation, who also have this power, to gauge when and where you are most powerful.

A ‘yes’ to question 8 suggests you could have problems getting others to accept this authority, which is something you should consider addressing in the last part of this exercise.

Expert

1. Does it take a year or more to learn to do your job well?
2. Do you need a qualification to do your job?
3. Do you have the highest qualification in your field?
4. Are you the only person in the organisation who can do your job right now?
5. If you were to leave the organisation, would they have difficulty replacing you?
6. Does your knowledge and skill relate to a major aspect of the organisation’s work?
7. Do others consult you and follow your advice?
8. Do senior people show that they value/need your contribution?
9. Do colleagues turn to you as someone they believe to be particularly competent?

Expert power does not have to mean academic qualifications. It could be, for example, experience in a role, knowledge of how something – a machine, a process, a customer or a system – works and so on.

A ‘yes’ to any of questions 1–6 indicates that you possess expert power.

If you have said ‘no’ to any of 7, 8 and 9 then this suggests a lack of perception of your expertise by others. Consider addressing this in the last part of this exercise. For expert power to be useful to you, it is critical that others recognise your contribution.

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| Notes: |

Resource

1. Can you give or withhold access to any of these:

* Money?
* Information?
* Promotion?
* ‘Perks’ – e.g. time off, flexible working?
* Training?
* Senior people?
* Computer or other operational or administrative facilities?
* Accommodation/space?
* Anything else?

1. Do others know this, perhaps because you have sometimes refused them?
2. Do others have an easy, alternative source of access to any of these things?

A ‘yes’ to any of the items in 1 indicates that you have power based on resource control. The more resources you control the stronger this powerbase.

A ‘no’ to question 2 suggests you may need to do more to make others aware that you have this power. Power is only helpful to us if others are aware we hold it.

However, a ‘yes’ to question 3 for any of the resources to which you hold access indicates a low level of power for that resource. You may not want to draw attention to this or find ways to disguise it from others.

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| Notes: |

Network

1. Are you on good terms with a number of people from the organisation across different sections/departments and levels?
2. Do you know who the most powerful people are?
3. Do you know powerful people in your organisation pretty well and are you in frequent contact with them?
4. Do you connect in any way away from work with some of the most powerful people in the organisation?
5. Do you socialise over coffee, drinks or meals with people from work?
6. Do peers and seniors confide in you?
7. Do people at more senior level drop in, email or call you on the phone for chats?
8. Do you work closely with anyone who is very senior to you in the hierarchy?
9. Do you have a powerful mentor/ally?

A ‘yes’ to any of these questions indicates that your power is based upon your networks. This is a particularly important source of power and one that many people need to develop. People do things for people they know and like, so it’s important to network upwards since that is where the decision makers are to be found. However, never forget the power that you can gain by knowing people widely across the organisation – from top to bottom.

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| Notes: |

Interpersonal

1. Do others take your views seriously?
2. Do you usually speak up at meetings?
3. Can you hold the attention of a large group or audience?
4. Are you comfortable giving presentations?
5. Do others ask your views on important issues?
6. Do you converse with your boss and other senior people on equal terms?
7. Are you good at getting resource and information for your group and defending them if necessary?
8. Do you make your point confidently, without sounding aggressive or weak?
9. Do you enjoy building rapport with others and making new relationships?

A ‘yes’ to any of these questions indicates that your power is based upon your interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are not innate but learned. People like people who are personable – who converse easily and who are not afraid to make their point and do so without alienating others. Interpersonal power is often the first power source by which others will judge you so it’s important to develop good interpersonal skills.

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| Notes: |

Your Profile

Now look at your answers again. It’s likely that you have some degree of power base in each of the key areas – so it’s time to establish your power profile.

There are no right answers here. You need to consider how powerful in each area *you* consider yourself to be and then how powerful you are perceived to be by *others* who are in your sphere – your colleagues, your staff and your seniors. Use these two views (and your answers to each section) to establish your power rating. Think carefully, and give yourself a power rating in your current role of between 1 (low) and 10 (high) for each of the areas.

Put your results on the graph below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Authority** | **Expertise** | **Resource** | **Network** | **Inter-Personal** |

Quite probably, your graph looks high in some areas and low in others. Don’t worry. This is normal and in the next exercise you’ll have the opportunity to improve your lower scoring areas.

Action Plan

Look again at your power profile and think about the power strategies we discussed. With the help of your partner, agree at least three things you will do to increase your power in one or more areas.

My Plan

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | What I will do: | When I will do this: | What I will achieve  by doing this: |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Make any other notes to help you here. | | | |

Channelling Your Influence

We all experience times when we need to influence others, or when others try to influence us - sometimes simultaneously. Training is a prime example of it.

During training, it’s normal to find your brain processing a number of thoughts whilst listening to someone else speak. It might be about what is being said, or it may be about something completely different.

It’s important to remember that it’s likely to be happening to people we interact with too.

This means that when we’re trying to influence someone it’s important to be able to cut through this noise.

Our Personal Radio Stations

Think about that voice in our heads. It’s like an internal radio station; a radio station that changes depending on how we are feeling.

To positively influence someone, you need to move people from whatever internal radio station they are listening to, and over to TIF-FM (This Is Fantastic For Me).

**ILDI-MW – I Like Doing It My Way.**

The radio station most of us listen to most of the time. When we are asked to change, the volume tends to get turned right up!

**TIF –FM – This Is Fantastic For Me.**

When you want to influence someone, this is the station you want them listening to as they hear/read your words.

**WII-FM – What’s In It For Me?**

If we want to get them listening to TIF-FM, they’ll need to have tuned into WII-FM first and heard an answer that they are happy with.

**MMFG-AM – Make Me Feel Good About Myself.**

This is the station most people forget. No matter how confident people appear to be, we all have times when we doubt ourselves. If someone doesn’t think they can adapt to a change, or do what is being asked of them, those doubts will drown out your message like interference on the radio. So, never forget to reassure the people you’re trying to influence that they can succeed with the changes you’re proposing.

My Channels of Influence - Example

This example shows how to complete the table for someone you need to influence right now at work and how you can get them to TIF-FM!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the Person** | **My Influence Goal** |
| Ashley Smith | To accept a move into a new role, managing a new department/service. |
| **What are they hearing on ILDI-MW?** | |
| I enjoy what I’m doing. I feel confident and I’m an expert in this area. I’m not confident using new systems and like the processes I’ve already established. I'm not sure that I will enjoy this new role. Will it play to my strengths? What if I am rubbish at it? Surely there is someone better suited. What will other people think of me? | |
| **What would they be hearing if they tuned into TIF-FM?** | |
| This new role will give me opportunities to develop new skills that will increase my value both within the company I work for, and also my marketability if I ever moved roles/organisations. It’ll give me opportunities to be creative in brand new ways and add variety to my day! I can make a real difference by getting this job right. I will really enjoy it! | |
| **What can I tell them on WII-FM?** | |
| We can give you training in the new systems and the freedom to develop the role in your own way. You’ll have more influence over the future development of the service and more creative control, as well as the ability to take a leading role in the development of this service. There is the potential to grow this part of the business and your own role within it. Success will lead to better financial rewards, more recognition and personal success. And it’s a chance to make a difference both to the organisation and its customers. | |
| **What messages can I give them on MMFG-AM?** | |
| You’ve already demonstrated many of the skills needed in this role - that’s why we think you’ll make an outstanding contribution here. You’ve already got a track record of creativity, and your logical mind and ability to process new information means you should have no real difficulty developing the technical skills needed. We believe in you. This (example of a piece of work) is why we know you can do it. I'm really excited to work with you on this. | |

My Channels of Influence

Consider someone you need to influence right now at work and how you can get them to TIF-FM!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the Person** | **My Influence Goal** |
|  |  |
| **What are they hearing on ILDI-MW?** | |
|  | |
| **What would they be hearing if they tuned into TIF-FM?** | |
|  | |
| **What can I tell them on WII-FM?** | |
|  | |
| **What messages can I give them on MMFG-AM?** | |
|  | |

Action Plan

Reflect on what you’ve been learning. What actions do you need to take to successfully adapt your behaviour?

| Goal | What action do I need to take? | Deadline | How will I know that I have succeeded? | What additional support do I need? |
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